

# DEVELOPMENT OF MICRO-REGIONS IN BÉKÉS COUNTY IN THE LATE NINETY'S

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The political and democratic transformation made significant changes in the spatial configuration of Hungary. Beside of regions and cities the role of micro-regions became more important.

During the political, democratic and economic transformation a lot of statistical micro-region fell into difficult socio and economic situation. County- and regional analyses show great differences between capital and countryside, between east and west in Hungary. At the analysis of micro-regions we get a more sophisticated picture [2]. There are 149 micro-regions in Hungary. The Hungarian capital Budapest doesn't take part of this system. The target of our analysis was to set up orders of rank of five important indicators in the context of Hungarian counties and micro-regions. We mainly concentrate to Békés county and its micro-regions. We tried to demonstrate the possible changes in the late ninety's.

Our research is suitable for orientation conclusions. During the analysis we realized, that our results are very similar to other former analysis [2],[1] made by experts. We found that Békés county and its micro-regions are in generally in sad situation. Signs of development are very rarely and concentrated to a few part of the county.

The results of Faluvégi's [2] research are similar to our answers. When we examined the orders of rank of the micro-regions, we found that in Békés county only the micro-regions of Békéscsaba and Orosháza can be considered as areas in development, and the micro-region of Szarvas is in stagnant state. The other three micro-regions of Békés county such as Mezokovácsbáza, a Sarkad és a Szeghalom remained behind.

## THE INDICATORS OF THE ANALYSIS

We set up the orders of rank of five indicators. We used the fact and figures of 1996, 1998, and 2000:

- resident population change as compared to 1990 (%),
- unemployment rate (%),
- gross income serving as basis of the personal income tax per permanent population (1000 Ft),
- corporations and unincorporated enterprises per 1000 inhabitants,
- passenger cars per 1000 inhabitants.

In 1996 there we could use only the data of 136 micro-regions, because, in 1996 the conurbation of Budapest till wasn't divided into micro-regions, and some data was missing from the documentation of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office too.

From 1998 we have the data of 149 micro-regions. Because of the division of the well developed conurbation of Budapest, the devaluation of the performance of micro-regions is sometimes only statistical.

When we selected the indicators of our analysis, there were important factors. First of all we wanted data from trustworthy source, and information about all micro-regions was essential. We tried to select indicators which are able to characterize the economic and social processes.

The gross income serving as basis of the personal income tax per permanent population informs us about the present state of the households, but it has also significant effect to the possibilities of the local government and to income of commerce.

Unemployment rate is an often used indicator, which shows us some factors of the economic activity of the area. When we making comparisons to the country average, or to the best areas, it is also important having in mind that in the period of research unemployment rate was generally decreasing. With the indicator of gross income serving as basis of the personal income tax per permanent population, and the unemployment rate, the situation of employees on the labor market, and their income positions can be measured.

Corporations and unincorporated enterprises per 1000 inhabitants informs us about the economic activity and about the possibilities of development. The indicator passenger cars per 1000 inhabitants, is often used to demonstrate of the advance state of the territory. This indicator is in close connection with the present and past income of the inhabitants and with the possibilities of their savings. As it is a summarized indicator, it won't show us difference in quality.

## COUNTY ANALYSIS

In the first part of our analysis we created table 1. to demonstrate the situation of Békés county

1. table  
Békés county in the light of a few important indicator

<b>Resident population change as compared to 1990 (%),</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>
The data of the 'best' county	0,9	7,1	8,6
National average	-1,7	-2,5	-3,0
<b>The data of Békés county</b>	<b>-2,1</b>	<b>-3,4</b>	<b>-4,3</b>
The position of Békés county in the national order of rank	17.	18.	14.

<b>Unemployment rate (%),</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>
The data of the 'best' county	4,3	3,1	2,3
National average	7,6	6,2	5,7
<b>The data of Békés county</b>	<b>9,7</b>	<b>8,1</b>	<b>7,6</b>
The position of Békés county in the national order of rank	15.	14.	12.
The performance of Békés county compared to the 'best' county (%)	226	261	362
The performance of Békés county compared to the national average (%)	176	131	133
<b>Gross income serving as basis of the personal income tax per permanent population (Thousand Ft),</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>
The data of the 'best' county	231	302	407
National average	176	261	358
<b>The data of Békés county</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>262</b>
The position of Békés county in the national order of rank	12.	16.	17.
The performance of Békés county compared to the 'best' county (%)	63	66	64
The performance of Békés county compared to the national average (%)	82	77	73
<b>Corporations and unincorporated enterprises per 1000 inhabitants, (piece)</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>
The data of the 'best' county	54	35	88
National average	30	37	84
<b>The data of Békés county</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>62</b>
The position of Békés county in the national order of rank	19.	15.	17.
The performance of Békés county compared to the 'best' county (%)	28	51	70
The performance of Békés county compared to the national average (%)	50	49	73
<b>Passenger cars per 1000 inhabitants, (piece)</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>
The data of the 'best' county	278	236	258
National average	223	220	236
<b>The data of Békés county</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>193</b>
The position of Békés county in the national order of rank	17.	16.	15.
The performance of Békés county compared to the 'best' county (%)	63	75	75
The performance of Békés county compared to the national average (%)	79	81	82

Source: Regional Statistical Yearbook 1996, 1998, 2000

At the analysis of resident population change as compared to 1990 the position of Békés county became better to 2000 (14.). But there is great difference in comparison to the county with the best performance. We can say that, the number of the resident population didn't change significantly, there was not greater emigration than the average.

Focusing on the unemployment rate we realized that the position of Békés county is getting better (15.,14.,12.). In comparison to the national average there is significant improvement especially to 1996. But if we compare to the performance of the best counties (in 1996 and in 2000 Pest county, in 1998 Győr-Moson-Sopron county) differences became bigger and bigger.

At the analysis of gross income serving as basis of the personal income tax per permanent population, position of Békés county is getting worse (12.,16.,17.,) to 2000. In the period of our research its performance compared to the best county is about 63-66%, compared to the national average it changed from 85 % (1996) to 73% (2000).

When we examined the number of corporations and unincorporated enterprises per 1000 inhabitants, we realized some positive change. But the absolute position of Békés county remained between the most undeveloped areas (19., 15., 17.,).

Passenger cars per 1000 inhabitants is an expressive indicator. If we analyze the performance of Békés county, we can say that it is one of the most undeveloped areas of Hungary. Unfortunately there was no quicker growth which would be essential for the closing up.

## ANALYSIS OF MICRO-REGIONS

Our conclusions mentioned above are strengthened by the information about micro-regions which can be found in table 2. But more heterogeneous picture can be seen if we examine the performance of micro-regions of Békés and Orosháza.

2. table

Micro-regions of Békés county in the order of rank of all micro-regions in Hungary

Micro-region of	Unemployment rate			Gross income serving as basis of the personal income tax per permanent population			Corporations and unincorporated enterprises per 1000 inhabitants			Passenger cars per 1000 inhabitants		
	1996	1998	2000	1996	1998	2000	1996	1998	2000	1996	1998	2000
<i>Békéscsaba</i>	51.	54.	59.	36.	44.	58.	30.	37.	33.	50.	55.	52.
<i>Mezőkovácsháza</i>	125.	130.	132.	112.	124.	127.	125.	145.	139.	124.	125.	128.
<i>Orosháza</i>	66.	76.	73.	46.	54.	72.	79.	94.	68.	88.	100.	103.
<i>Sarkad</i>	62.	128.	115.	60.	134.	140.	60.	135.	145.	92.	129.	127.
<i>Szarvas</i>	78.	71.	65.	69.	95.	95.	34.	38.	54.	72.	84.	82.
<i>Szeghalom</i>	116.	138.	126.	97.	114.	115.	135.	149.	146.	136.	146.	147.

Source: Regional Statistical Yearbook 1996, 1998, 2000,  
in 1996 there were 136, in 1998 and in 2000 there were 149 micro-regions

The changes of indicators are valued with the help of the order of rank of all micro-regions in Hungary, and with the performance of micro-regions as compared to the national average.

3. table

Important indicators of Békés county as compared to the national average (%)

Micro-region of	Unemployment rate			Gross income serving as basis of the personal income tax per permanent population			Corporations and unincorporated enterprises per 1000 inhabitants			Passenger cars per 1000 inhabitants		
	1996	1998	2000	1996	1998	2000	1996	1998	2000	1996	1998	2000
<i>Békéscsaba</i>	103	98	98	96	90	85	73	70	94	93	95	96
<i>Mezőkovácsháza</i>	192	190	212	60	58	55	23	22	46	64	68	68
<i>Orosháza</i>	113	113	111	90	84	77	40	28	71	81	81	80
<i>Sarkad</i>	109	185	182	80	54	48	47	24	45	80	67	68
<i>Szarvas</i>	124	110	104	76	70	68	67	68	82	83	86	85
<i>Szeghalom</i>	176	202	205	66	63	62	20	19	45	50	53	54

Source: Regional Statistical Yearbook 1996, 1998, 2000

Analysing the resident population change as compared to 1990, it is provable that with the exception of micro-region of Sarkad all micro-regions' position became worse to 1998, but to 2000 all micro-regions' position with the exception of micro-region of Szeghalom became better. If we examine the whole four years relatively all the micro-regions' performance became better, but unfortunately only micro-region of Szeghalom can be found in the first half of the rank.

At the analysis of unemployment rate it is seen that all micro-regions' position with the exception of micro-region of Szarvas are worse, but if we compare to the national average there is moderate improvement with the exception of micro-region of Szarvas and Szeghalom.

To 2000 the situation is getting better, which can be seen in the order of rank too. If we take into consideration both the order of rank and the comparison to the national average it is provable that the micro-regions of Szeghalom and Mezőkovácsháza are remaining behind, micro-region of Sarkad is preserving its sad situation, and the micro-regions of Békéscsaba, Orosháza, and Szarvas are closing up to the national average.

Focusing on gross income serving as basis of the personal income tax per permanent population we can say that all micro-regions of Békés county lost their former positions. Especially the state of the micro-regions of Sarkad and Mezőkovácsháza changed drastically, with the micro-region of Szeghalom they can be found in the bottom of the order of rank of all micro-regions in Hungary.

When we speak about the number of corporations and unincorporated enterprises per 1000 inhabitants, we have to notice that in 2000 the methodology of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office changed, so in 2000 we could use only the order of rank. To 1998 all micro-regions of Békés county lost their former positions, especially the micro-regions of Sarkad, Mezőkovácsháza, and Szeghalom changed drastically. If we examine them in the order of rank of all micro-regions in Hungary they are in the bottom. To 2000 all micro-regions' position became better with the exception of micro-regions of Szarvas and Szeghalom, but significant positive changes happened

only in the micro-region of Orosháza. The micro-regions of Békéscsaba, and Szarvas are in quite a good situation, but the other micro-regions' positions speak about a significant under-development.

Examining the number of passenger cars per 1000 inhabitants there is an apparent discrepancy between table 2. and 3. While in the order of rank all the micro-region's position became worse to 1998, the performance of all the micro-regions compared to the national average was better with the exception of micro-region of Sarkad. From 1998 to 2000 we can declare that there were no significant changes.

## SUMMARY

Even if there was a general economic development in Hungary, Békés county remained one of the less developed areas. On the basis of our analysis focused on the order of rank of all micro-regions in Hungary there is some moderate improvement, but if we compare the county's performance to the national average or to the best areas we can say, that the situation of Békés county is mainly getting worse. We have to mention that there is some positive turn. There are favorable economic processes (decreasing unemployment rate, GDP growth etc.), but the positive changes of these never reached the national average, so no closing up is possible.

The development of Békés county is quite heterogeneous. We can't speak about closing up even in the case of micro-regions of Békéscsaba, Orosháza and Szarvas, but the micro-regions of Mezokovácsháza, Sarkad, and Szeghalom remained in under-developed and stagnating situation.

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